

Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 DODE-00 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 L-03 IGA-02 TRSE-00 AID-05

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R 110840Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4391

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 897

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: MASS, CE

SUBJECT: CHANGES IN FOREIGN MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAM

REF: STATE 51768

1. FOLLOWING ARE RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS RAISED IN
PARAGRAPH 5 REFTTEL:

(A) GRANT CONUS MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAM FOR SRI LANKA
MILITARY HAS BEEN IN ABEYANCE SINCE 1972. GSL SUSPENDED
IT FOR POLITICAL REASONS, WISHING TO AVOID APPEARANCE OF
MILITARY CONNECTIONS WITH MAJOR POWERS WHICH MIGHT CALL
ITS NON-ALIGNED CREDENTIALS INTO QUESTION. SRI LANKA
MILITARY, HOWEVER, CONTINUES TO BE INTERESTED IN TRAINING
PROGRAM, AND WE HAVE KEPT OPTION OF RESPONDING AFFIRMATIVELY
AND QUICKLY TO REQUEST FOR REVIVAL OF PROGRAM BY
MAINTAINING MINIMAL LINE ITEM (\$15,000) FOR SRI LANKA.
AS SRI LANKA PROGRAM IS NOT ACTIVE, NEW COSTS, WHEN
KNOWN, WILL HAVE NO EFFECT ON BILATERAL RELATIONS.

(?) HOST GOVERNMENT PREVIOUSLY WAS MOST INTERESTED
IN PRACTICAL COURSES OF TRAINING, SUCH AS EQUIPMENT
MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES. AS COUNTRY
MOST SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY WORLD-WIDE INFLATION AND
FACING CONTINUING SEVERE SHORTAGE OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE,
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GSL IS VERY UNLIKELY TO RELEASE HARD CURRENCY FOR

MILITARY TRAINING PURPOSES. TRAINING REQUIREMENT IS NOT MET; RESULT IS LESS EFFICIENT USE OF MILITARY MANPOWER AND EQUIPMENT.

(C) NOT APPLICABLE. SEE A ABOVE.

(D) NOT APPLICABLE. SEE A ABOVE.

(E) GSL HAS BEEN USING TRAINING PROGRAMS IN OTHER COUNTRIES SUCH AS UK AND INDIA. IN SPECIFIC CASE OF RUSSIAN-GUFTED OSA PATROL BOAT, WHICH WAS TURNED OVER IN DECEMBER 1975, CEYLONese NAVY HAD CREW IN TRAINING IN USSR FOR MUCH OF 1975 AND THERE ARE CURRENTLY RUSSIAN ADVISERS WHO REPORTEDLY WILL REMAIN HERE UNTIL END OF 1976. THESE OTHER PROGRAMS DO NOT SATISFY NEED FOR TRAINING RELATED TO PROVISION OF US EQUIPMENT, VALUED AT ABOUT \$3 MILLION, GRANTED UNDER 1971 AUTHORIZATION IN CONNECTION WITH APRIL 1971 INSURGENCY. THEY ALSO DO NOT REINFORCE US TIES WITH SRI LANKA MILITARY , WHICH HAVE BEEN CORDIAL AND WHICH MISSION BELIEVES IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO REINFORCE, IF POSSIBLE, BY MODEST USE OF RESOURCES.

(F) NOT APPLICABLE BUT SEE A AND E ABOVE.

VAN HOLLEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY TRAINING, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976COLOMB00897
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760092-0339
From: COLOMBO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760372/aaaac1qg.tel
Line Count: 85
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION PM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 51768
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 JUN 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <21 JUN 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CHANGES IN FOREIGN MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAM
TAGS: MASS, CE, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006